

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ELLs IN THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM

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Abstract

The number of immigrants in the United States continues to rise, hence an increase of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the mainstream classrooms. As a result, teachers need to be equipped to effectively respond to the needs of these students. In order for language learners to be successful in the mainstream classroom, teachers must employ effective strategies to scaffold students' learning so they can be successful. In this context, strategies to support ELLs would be defined as routines and protocols, integrated in daily activities for language learners to thrive in their regular classes. Scholars explain the impact of the growth of ELLs and Immigration on the education system, the challenges of ELLs and how teachers may support these students. This research provides information on factors concerning ELLs and presents an online handbook with a collection of strategies to support ELLs within the mainstream classroom. The online handbook outlines strategies under three main headings: Academic Language, Classroom Interactions, and Comprehension. All three are essential components for students' success. An online handbook will be of great benefit to teachers and other professionals working with ELLs, as it is easily accessible and may provide interactive elements and suggestions for incorporating technology.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my best friend who has skillfully solved my technical difficulties and provided support when needed. Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my siblings and friends for always encouraging me to keep going and to focus on the rewards of my hard work.

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I would like to thank Dr. Molly Riddle, my advisor and instructor, for her support throughout this thesis writing process. The structure she provides, her expertise, speedy feedback, and positive attitude are extremely helpful. Special thanks to the writing center at Greensboro College and all instructors who served me throughout my graduate studies. Finally, many thanks to financial aid at Greensboro college for assistance allotted to my studies.

Table of Contents

	Page
Title Page	i
Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	vi
Chapters	
1. Chapter One: Introduction	1-4
2. Chapter Two: Literature Review	5-13
3. Chapter Three: Project Design	14-17
4. Chapter Four: The Project	18-24
5. Chapter Five: Conclusions	25-27
References	28-33

List of Tables, Figures, and Maps

Tables	Page
4.1 Cover page.....	18
4.3 Academic language strategies.....	20
4.4 Virtual vocabulary journal.....	21
4.5 Virtual edition of four corners.....	22
4.6 The questioning technique and role play.....	23
4.7 Online thumbs up/down.....	23
Maps	
4.2 Concept Map.....	19

Chapter 1: Introduction

Many classroom teachers in the 21st century are faced with the challenge of differentiating instruction and effectively impacting students and their families. Many struggle to find effective strategies to support English language learners (ELLs) in the mainstream classroom. The techniques used to scaffold language learners learning in the classroom are few, and teachers and students would benefit greatly if ideas were easily accessible. There has been a trend with ELL students falling behind because of the many challenges they face. Teachers are not trained nor equipped to reach these students. If deliberate steps are not taken, they will continue to be left behind. It is my delight to help to minimize the effects. The purpose of this project is to organize a collection of strategies to support ELLs within the mainstream classroom. I will produce an online handbook sourcing best practices and strategies to work with ELLs. Teachers and other professionals working with ELLs will be able to find practical strategies to support students' academic language acquisition, classroom interaction and comprehension. This will be an online resource, so teachers have access at their fingertips.

ELLs stands for English language learners and refers to students who are in the process of acquiring English as a second language. They may be at different levels in their acquisition. According to the book *Teaching ELLs Across Content Areas: Issues and Strategies*, Li (2016) outlined that:

An ELL refers to a student whose first language (L1) is not English, who is in the process of learning English but not yet able to profit fully from English-only instruction, and who needs instructional support in order to access academic content in school. (pp. 4-5).

English language learners entering the education system with limited language skills will need structures in place to help them perform well academically. Teachers must be intentional with lesson planning and integrating strategies that will help these students to grow.

According to Li (2016), teachers can assess the level of ELLs to better accommodate each student's learning. There are some factors to consider.

- Length of residence in the United States
- Literacy skills in the primary language(s)
- Previous schooling
- Education background of parents
- Socioeconomic status & resources available at home
- Personal life experiences
- Cultural norms (pp. 5).

Each of these factors influences ELLs' acquisition of English language skills and content knowledge as they enter their new schools in the United States (Li, 2016, p. 5).

The number of (ELLs) in public schools is rapidly growing, as the achievement gap continues to increase between ELLs and other student populations (Zuniga, 2019). If it is a trend that these students are always in the red (low academically and sometimes socially), then teachers ought to make deliberate efforts to provide scaffolds for these students and work towards closing the gap. Teachers need to be equipped to serve all students and help them to succeed. This handbook will be helpful in the process. Hence the intent of this project is to investigate and generate a collection of strategies to support ELLs within the mainstream classroom. Strategies to support ELLs would be defined as routines, protocols, and a plan of action put in place for language learners to thrive in their regular classes. This is very important

as there continues to be emphasis on the rapid growth of ELLs in the classroom, but teachers are lacking resources.

Coady et al. (2016) expressed some of these deficiencies in the article, “Aiming for Equity: Preparing Mainstream Teachers for Inclusion or Inclusive Classrooms?” Mainstream teachers of primary grades are expected to differentiate instruction for students with different learning needs, which includes English language learners. Most teachers have limited experience in working with students in the process of learning English as a second language (Coady et. al., 2016; Griffin, 2008; Li, 2016; Teng, 2018). Even though teacher preparation is a problem, the number of ELLs in the mainstream classroom is increasing every year. As the percentage of ELLs in the classroom continues to grow, a handbook of strategies will be beneficial to teachers. Teachers must acknowledge the importance of being aware and prepared to meet the needs of all students. Colin (2012) expressed that currently, every one in four children are from immigrant families in the United States, and in most cases, English is not the language spoken at home. “In the decade between the 1997-98 and 2008-09 school years, the number of English language learners in public schools increased by 51% while the general population of students grew by just seven percent” (Samson et., al. 2012, p.7). Given the vast growth in the number of ELL students in the United States, all teachers in the U.S should be prepared to have ELLs in their classrooms (Collins, 2012; Teng, 2018; Samson et., al. 2012). This fact alone justifies my rationale. For teachers to help these students to be successful, they must be equipped. In order to make outstanding progress and improve the outcomes for ELLs, teachers must be prepared and supported differently, to better serve the growing population and to help all student to achieve success. With additional demands of learning standards and the evaluation of teachers, the

opportunity to make things right for all students is now. Urgent attention is required for lifting the educational performance standard for ELLs (Collin, 2012).

Joy and excitement are always present when students learn and grow. Students also build their self- confidence as they see the growth in themselves. The progress made and the many skills mastered becomes a motivating factor. Having this online handbook a click away with all the various strategies will be a very helpful tool for teachers and all stakeholders when planning. Teachers may try different strategies as necessary to meet the needs of specific students. This helps to make professionals working with ELLs more flexible and knowledgeable about how to effectively impact these students. DelliCarpini (2011) noted that “working with English language learners in mainstream ELA classrooms can provide rich rewards in terms of developing multiple perspectives, sharing diverse experiences, and developing understanding of different cultural practices” (p.1). Teachers and students benefit from the many rewards. These students, however, can also challenge teachers to keep up with required academic standards. Providing support for ELLs throughout the reading process, enhances the outcomes for students in terms of comprehension and boosted self-confidence as a reader. In addition, teacher effectiveness can be improved with successful support that will make the classroom teacher's job less challenging (DelliCarpini, 2011).

As mainstream classroom teachers we continue to do the best we can to effectively reach our students. Opportunities for personal and professional development are always helpful as one continues to seek self-growth, and to be a better version of oneself in this noble profession.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The level of diversity in US classes continues to grow (Jazen, 2007; O’Hearn, 2017; Lee et., al. 2013) which requires teachers to be equipped to meet the needs of all students. According to Brooks et. al. (2010), the issue of changing the culture of challenging schools to be inclusive supportive educational communities for English Language learners is a pressing issue facing schools in the United States. The National Center for English Language Acquisition (NCELA, 2006) reported that “in 2005-2006, ELL students comprised 10.3% of the enrollment in public schools, an increase of 57% over the past decade” (p. 146). Many of these students are new to the system and have minimal language acquisition skills, hence facing many challenges in a mainstream classroom. These students are integrated in classrooms with other students who are mostly native English speakers and perhaps just a few like themselves.

English Language Learners (ELLs) refers to students whose first language (L1) is not English, who are in the process of learning English but not yet able to profit fully from English only instruction, and who need instructional support (Li, 2016). Griffin (2008) and Li (2016) explained that as a result of the rapid growth in the population, ELLs have flooded into the education system in America. Following reports from the U.S. Census Bureau (2009-2013), it has been stated that millions of U.S. residents over the age of five speak a language other than English at home. It has also been discovered that there are different ELL groups in the classrooms; however, the most common of them are Spanish speakers.

Elementary teachers across the country can also concur with observations of increased ELLs every year (Teng, 2018; Samson et., al. 2012). Hence, there is a need for increased knowledge and skills in dealing with ELLs in the classroom. The purpose of this research is to investigate and generate a collection of strategies to support ELLs within the mainstream

classroom. The questions in focus are: What are some effective strategies for supporting ELLs within the mainstream elementary classroom and how do effective teachers scaffold their ELL students' learning in a regular classroom? Throughout the literature review, I give an overview of various factors affecting ELLs: The growth of ELLs and Immigration, Challenges of ELLs, Teachers' Limitations and Strategies used to Support ELLs in the Classrooms. Last, I end the review by outlining some gaps in the literature and guidance/factors to consider in moving forward with this research.

The Growth Immigration and ELLs in School

How long have you been in the US, and have you been seeing an increase in immigrants in your interactions? Well, the fact is there has been tremendous growth. Right across the literature reviewed, authors have made mention of the rapid growth of immigrants resulting in the growth of ELLs in schools (Clarkson, 2008; Bingue 2016; O'Hearn 2017; Teng, 2018; Wilsey, 2018). Clarkson (2008) expressed that:

Immigrants have entered the United States from different countries during the last century and a half. Immigrants have identified several different reasons for emigrating to the United States. These reasons have included political asylum, joining other family members, perceived economic opportunity, and educational opportunities. (Clarkson, 2008, p. 3)

In the 19th and 20th centuries schools had to accommodate many new students with diverse languages and cultural backgrounds right across the nation. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), ELLs are the fastest growing student population in public schools in the United States (May 2015). Since the early 1990s, public schools across the United States have experienced vast demographic (Samson et., al. 2012; Teng, 2018; Wilsey, 2018) changes as

a result of increasing share of foreign born and immigrant students. Immigration continues to increase, and the trends are as diverse as the people represented. Residents from Latin America makes up approximately half of the recent immigrant population in the U.S (Clarkson, 2008). Researchers have projected that by the year 2030, 40% of the school-age population in the United States will be ELLs (Cigdem, 2017; Clarkson, 2008; DelliCarpini, 2008).

As a result of the great increase of language learners in all regions of the nation, teachers are likely to have more ELLs in their classes and need to be prepared to teach these students. As our ELL population continues to increase (Jazen, 2007; Lee et., al. 2013), the only way to move forward is to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills and provide ongoing opportunities for professional development in order to create classes that truly address the needs of diverse learners (Clair, 1995; DelliCarpini, 2008). The demand for trained teachers to work with these students is of great importance as the increase of these students has become one of the major trends in our schools across the nation. Teachers must find ways to work to address the comprehension, language, and literacy standards for ELLs in the classroom (DelliCarpini, 2008). Upholding the conviction that well prepared teachers can make a great impact on student learning, it is useful for ELL teachers to strengthen their expertise by understanding ELLs from a language and cultural standpoint and how both components shape school student's experiences at school (Andrei, et al., 2019; Bingue, 2016; Clair, 1995; de Jong, et. al., 2013; DelliCarpini, 2008; Janzen, 2007; Li, 2016). Teachers will be more effective if they have the necessary tools and resources needed to help language learners to be successful.

Challenges of ELLs

ELLs are faced with many challenges that may have an impact on their social and academic lives (Bingue, 2016; Clarkson, 2008; Farah, 2017; Li 2016). ELLs are affected by

many factors in their homes such as limited parental time, poverty, insufficient resources, and education, as a result many of these children have limited early language development and extremely low early childhood cognitive development (Farah 2017). Farah (2017) expressed that many immigrants may have financial difficulties. Almost two-thirds of ELLs come from low-income families (NCELA, 2007). Clarkson (2008) also pointed out the prejudice against foreigners who are unfamiliar with American customs and lack proficiency in English are less likely to be employed and more likely to be paid lower wages; hence, many are in the lower class of the social hierarchy. As a result, ELLs may be required to babysit their younger siblings until late at night, because their parents may have to work long hours which makes it difficult to complete assigned homework. At the same time, most parents are unable to help their children for different reasons. They may not speak the language or have limited academic background to provide assistance. Consistently not speaking English at home may be a major challenge faced by ELL students and their immigrant families face (Clarkson, 2008). With all these challenges the families encounter, the students must take on the daunting task of learning a new language and attempt to learn the content of a subject at the same time (Bingue, 2016).

ELLs also face culture shock and may take time to adjust to their new environment (de Jong et. al., 2013). Educators and principals should work together to lessen the impact of the transition. Students will feel comfortable and are more likely to do better academically. When administrators and teachers work together, administrators must understand the importance of supporting academic language and academic development for ELL students and creating inclusive schools. Teachers of ELLs also need to be able to scaffold cooperative learning activities appropriately and explicitly for academic talk and equal participation for all ELL students (de Jong et. al., 2013; Brooks et. al., 2010). Schools should create a culture of using

academic language and other strategies to support learning; it makes it easier for students as they will have similar experiences throughout the school.

Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication, which refers to communication among individuals from diverse cultures, is one of the most important factors in the teaching and learning process (Aikman, 1997). Aikman (1997) stated, “Interculturality is a process of social negotiation which aims to construct dialogical and more just relations between social actors belonging to different cultural universes on the basis of recognition of diversity” (p. 8). Interculturality in education values and recognizes the wealth of linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity in the country. A space for rich intercommunication through dialogue is provided and ought to be guiding principle of the entire education system (Aikman, 1997). The world has become interconnected, and communication is the most vital aspect of our interaction. Intercultural Communication is necessary for students to learn how to communicate in a respectful, tolerant, and healthy manner (AlTaher, 2020).

Language is the main tool by which this can be done. Educators today are presented with a diverse classroom (Bingue, 2016); hence teachers must be open minded to foster intercultural communication among their students and their peers. The impact of intercultural miscommunication on these students can be tremendous. They experience culture shock after moving to a new environment (Huang, et al., 2012). Culture shock can spark feelings of anxiety, helplessness, and depression. In addition to these feelings, many teachers aim facilitate a smoother transition for ELL students by teaching them North American culture with expectations of a better understanding of language use (Huang, et al., 2012 p.3). Miscommunication can also affect students who come from diverse cultural backgrounds (AlTaher, 2020; Huang, et al.,

2012). Huang expressed that, miscommunication is often blamed on speakers of accented or foreign sounding English. These folks are also most times rejected as legitimate conversation partners.

ESOL teachers need to understand that students' cultures affect their learning of a language and cultural and linguistic differences hold the potential for intercultural miscommunication. Therefore, ESOL teachers need to use a variety of strategies to help prevent intercultural miscommunication from occurring within the classroom. (Huang, et al., 2012, p.3)

Teachers should make deliverable efforts to have structures in their classrooms that will help to foster and improve students' communication skills.

Teachers' Limitations

National Policies

New federal and state policies have collided with the rapidly changing demographics creating more challenges for mainstream teachers throughout the region. Limited resources to create diverse classrooms to meet the needs of all students, politically charged debates on bilingual education, are some of the challenges faced by mainstream teachers (Reed & Railsback 2003). The passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) brings ELL students into the same context of standards and accountability as their native English-speaking peers. All children including ELLs must reach high standards by demonstrating proficiency in language arts and math. These new guidelines ensure that all students, not just native English-speaking students, are part of each state's accountability system and their academic progress is followed over time (Griffin, 2008; Reed & Railsback, 2003). But how does a teacher achieve success with ELLs when there are so

many challenges, and teachers did not have professional training for working with these students? It is important for structures to be put in place to support teachers.

Researchers examined the fact that mainstream teachers are given the task of supporting language learning in the content area despite lack of training (Andrei, et al. 2019; Clair, 1995; Curran 2003; Janzen, 2007). Teachers find it difficult to differentiate instruction and bring all their native English-speaking students to perform on grade level in all subject areas; ELLs present an even greater challenge, particularly for teachers of students who are just being exposed to the language and need foundational skills. These teachers, however, typically have little training in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) methods. Authors expressed that a great percentage of classroom teachers did not have ESOL training (Andrei, et al. 2019; Hite & Evans, 2006; Janzen, 2007).

With the enactment of NCLB legislation and the attention on teacher liability and accountability, it is important to focus on strategies to help ELLs thrive and achieve in the mainstream classroom. For this reason, it is imperative schools ensure mainstream teachers have access to professional development to gain a better understanding of the programs, principles, theories, and strategies that have proven successful in educating ELL students (Bingue, 2016; Reed 2003).

Classroom Strategies and Practices

Teachers should continue to provide scaffolds for students to be successful, while maintaining high expectations and providing opportunities for student interaction and using effective strategies to aid comprehension and build students' vocabulary. Strategies more specific to ELLs include incorporating home cultures in teaching, using or allowing students to use native languages, and adjusting teachers' language (Hite and Evan, 2006). Linking content

learning with language learning and providing opportunities for students to engage with each other in discourse such as cooperative grouping may be of great benefit to ELLs (Hite and Evan, 2006).

Researchers presented a host of strategies teachers may use to reach ELLs (Andrei et al., 2019; Cummins, 2005; Hite and Evans, 2006; Shatz & Wilkinson, 2010). Teachers should plan lessons with the emphasis placed on the importance of language and academic support integrated in the activities. The use of visuals, manipulatives, repetition, and simplification of speech are all vital strategies outlined. Visual included pictures, word picture cards, computers, books, drawings, graphic organizers, and manipulators for Math and Language Art instruction. Repeated exposure to words in multiple contexts, utilize the children's knowledge of their L1 to learn English words, particularly by studying cognates, and to teach children directly about words by explicitly focusing on root words, definitions, part of speech, and using the word in context were of great benefit to students. Simplification of speech refers to reinforcing the spoken word by writing on the board and slowing down the pace of speaking and using words that are simpler for students to comprehend.

Teachers expressed the need to be aware of figurative language or to watch their own use of idioms in the materials they use; as modeling is essential when instructing of ELLs (Andrei et al., 2019; Cummins, 2005; Hite and Evans, 2006; Shatz & Wilkinson, 2010). Students are more likely to be successful when the content is relevant and meaningful, which leads to enhanced motivation, another necessary component in successful second language acquisition. Lack of connection to the learners' lives and the absence of relevance and comprehension will not foster meaningful language and content learning (DelliCarpini, 2008). Teachers should strive to plan

meaningful lessons using various strategies, so students may love and be actively involved in the learning process which subsequently leads to growth.

Conclusion

There is a host of existing literature on this topic; however, a few gaps were identified. Many strategies have been outlined nevertheless there is no data to show students' academic growth after consistent implantation of these strategies. Many times, teachers read articles providing strategies with a list of ideas, but none outlining the implementation and success of these strategies. Bingue (2016) stated that teachers struggle to select best practices from the research-based strategies, pedagogy, and instruction to support the ELL students to execute the language proficiently orally and written. Existing literature also points out the many limitations and challenges of teachers and students. However, there are not many recommendations made to teachers' coping mechanisms and how to guide their students to cope with the challenges.

Future Considerations

An objective to seek answers and close the gaps in the literature throughout the process of exploring the research questions/ topic; to find strategies that are measurable and effective for mainstream teachers within the US. Yes, the number of ELL students in the United States continues to increase, thus teachers should expect to have ELLs in their classrooms. For teachers to help these students to be successful, they must be equipped. Change is needed in the way teachers are trained and prepared for the classroom in order for the education system to effectively meet the needs and serve this growing population (Samson & Collin, 2012). Regardless, it is encouraging to know, amidst the challenges, teachers continue to find ways to reach their students. Impact a student today; He/she will be grateful someday!

Chapter 3: Project Design

In this chapter I will explain the reason for developing an online handbook for teachers, sourcing strategies to support ELLs. I will outline three main headings that are necessary for ELLs success as a guide for organizing the strategies; Classroom Interaction, Academic Language and Comprehension—all three are great components to examine when considering ELLs success.

The intent of this project is to investigate and generate a collection of strategies to support ELLs within the mainstream classroom. At this point in the research, strategies to support ELLs would be defined as routines, protocols, and a plan of action put in place for language learners to thrive in their regular classes. The growing number of ELLs in the mainstream classroom continues to increase every year as public schools across the United States have experienced vast demographic changes as a result of increasing share of foreign born and immigrant students (Cigdem, 2017; Clarkson, 2008; Samson et. al., 2012; DelliCarpini, 2008; Teng, 2018). Currently, more than one out of four children are from immigrant families, and most times speak a language other than English in their home. Teachers should expect to have ELLs in their classrooms, as the number of ELL students in the United States continues to increase (Samson et. al., 2012; Teng, 2018). Think for a second, what percentage of the struggling students in your class are language learners? The presence of ELLs continues to increase in classrooms across America, however the disheartening aspect is that these students struggle academically and are at high risk for academic failure (Janzen, 2008; O'Hearn, 2017). Hence it is of importance teachers are equipped with the necessary resources to plan and prepare meaningful lessons to meet the needs of these students. This statement alone justifies my rationale. Samson et. al., (2012) also explained that it is imperative to make significant changes

in the way educators are supported and prepared to provide outstanding progress for the outcomes of ELLs. Consequently, this online handbook will serve as a great resource providing practical strategies that teachers can implement in the classroom to help close the learning gap.

Academic language refers to the specialized language, both written and oral, that facilitates thinking and communication about disciplinary content of academic settings.

“Academic language is specialized because it needs to be able to convey abstract, technical, and nuanced ideas and phenomena that are not typically examined in settings that are characterized by social and or casual conversation” (Nagy et. al., 2012, p.2). The focus of academic language is purposefully identifying ways that teachers can more effectively support students in learning through the spoken and written language (Nagy et. al., 2012; Schleppegrell, 2012) and facilitate powerful new ways of successfully engaging all children. Janzen (2008) emphasizes students' functional use of academic language utilizing different techniques which includes hand motions, word walls, and chants to help students memorize specific vocabulary. Academic Language, therefore, is explicit language instruction, not a separate or additional standard in the classroom—it should be integrated in content instruction (Janzen, 2008).

Classroom interaction has to do with how students collaborate and work together to acquire new skills and learning. Teng (2018) expresses that it is primarily a dynamic social process in which participants interconnect exchanging knowledge, skills, and values.

“Collaboration is defined as people working together. In education, we can add that collaboration includes working together to have a positive effect on student learning” (DelliCarpini et. al., 2009, p. 2). The teaching and learning process involves collaborative interaction between the student and the expert in a highly situated context. During this interactive process, participants construct knowledge and make meaning of the information shared, as result of these social

interactions learning we have been achieved. The benefit of these social interactions is an integral part of learning in a classroom context, (Teng, 2018). Providing opportunities in the classroom for purposeful interaction will be beneficial to ELLs as they learn well from their peers. Classroom interaction can be highly contextualized, spontaneous, and out of expectations.

From a sociocultural perspective, learning in the classroom is socially mediated and can be best achieved through the shared interaction between the teacher and students. As a form of classroom discourse, classroom interaction displays through different communication patterns and participation structures. (Teng, 2018, p. 21)

Strategies on how to organize meaningful and engaging collaborative activities within the classroom would be rewarding to teachers and students.

Comprehension is the ultimate outcome hoped for within the classroom. If comprehension is not taking place, it means students are not learning. It is important to have structure in place that supports students' comprehension. Assisting English language learners in mainstream classrooms provides great rewards for teachers and students. Students will be more understanding and appreciative of different cultural practices and have the opportunity of sharing diverse experiences. Implementing effective strategies to support ELLs throughout the reading process can enhance outcomes for those students in terms of comprehension and in terms of a greater sense of self- efficacy as readers (DelliCarpini, 2011). When students have been taught various strategies to aid comprehension and they can transfer and apply this knowledge, success is inevitable:

When students are aware of strategies and use them automatically, they have become independent readers. Strategies are not naturally acquired. Students become aware of and engage in specific strategies through explicit instruction. Readers require support

throughout the reading process, and teachers who understand this and provide these literacy scaffolds can move their students more steadily along the continuum of reading and literacy development. (DelliCarpini, 2011, p.2)

Teachers should expose students to various strategies that will help them to check their own learning, develop a sense of independence, and take ownership of their success.

This handbook should serve as a meaningful and easily accessible resource for teachers when planning for ELLs. Its intent is to benefit both teachers and students, as a list of strategies will be outlined under each heading mentioned above. Teachers and other professionals working with ELLs will be able to find practical strategies to support students' academic language acquisition, classroom interaction and comprehension. This will be an online resource, so teachers have access at their fingertips. The objective is to provide options of different strategies to use when working with ELLs, which subsequently will enhance the impact made, and make progress towards the ultimate goal, which is the success of ELLs.

Chapter 4: Strategies to Support English Language Learners in the Classroom

This online handbook provides teachers with strategies for helping ELLs succeed in the mainstream classroom. Strategies are provided under three main headings: Academic Language, Classroom Interaction, and Comprehension--all three are very vital components to consider for students' success. This handbook will be easily accessible to teachers and may also provide virtual tips and or a video with further explanation for some strategies listed, hence the reason for an online handbook. The title of the hand book is “Strategies to support English Language Learner in the Classroom” (Figure 4.1) and the link for the document is;

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/172-LH6NN8tHYmshJiKRRYGAXv2mC4Cx_M3xEFu-yydE/edit#slide=id.gf83b6d9dd6_0_0

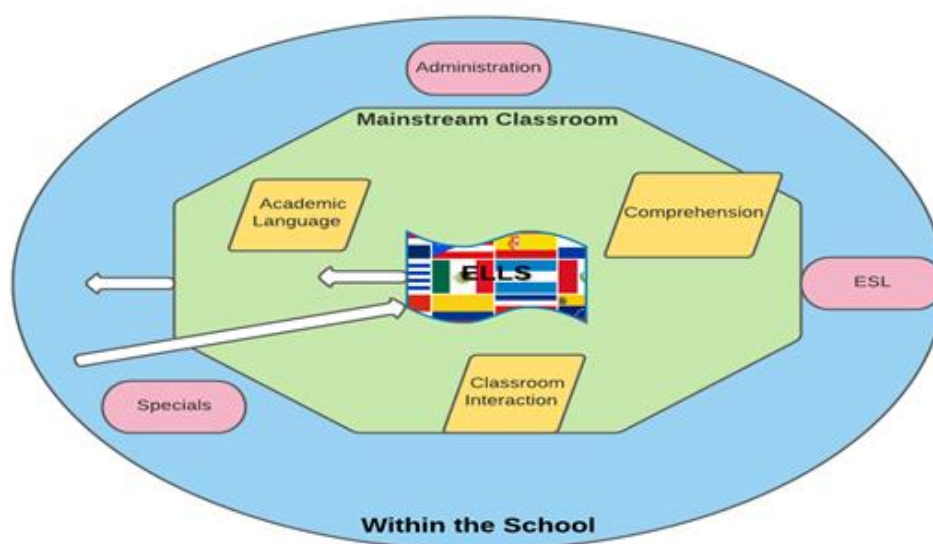
Figure 4.1: *Cover Page*



The online handbook may also be beneficial to all stakeholders (e.g., administration, specialists, ESL teachers) who have an influence on ELLs. Figure 4.2 shows- a concept map with connections among school professionals and ELLs. In the center stands our ELLs students from various cultural backgrounds ready to learn and grow. They are all placed in a mainstream

classroom, in which they are surrounded with a host of English speakers and perhaps a few other students like themselves. Therefore, it is imperative that extra measures be taken to reach these students. Practicing academic language protocols, comprehension strategies, and providing opportunities for students to interact and have at least basic conversations, are a few great scaffolds to start. This handbook provides additional strategies to support students in these areas. Within the school, the students are influenced by other stakeholders such as administration, specialists, ESL teachers and others; all of whom will benefit from gaining additional knowledge on how to impact our language learners effectively. Considering all these stakeholders, the role they play, and the many factors surrounding the growth of our ELL students, educators should take a comprehensive approach to reaching ELLs in all aspects of their education, which reflect on their performance in the mainstream classroom.

Figure 4.2: *Concept Map*



Academic language is vital in ELLs' language development. Wiley (2018) explained the importance of explicitly teaching content vocabulary. A student's language ability often directly

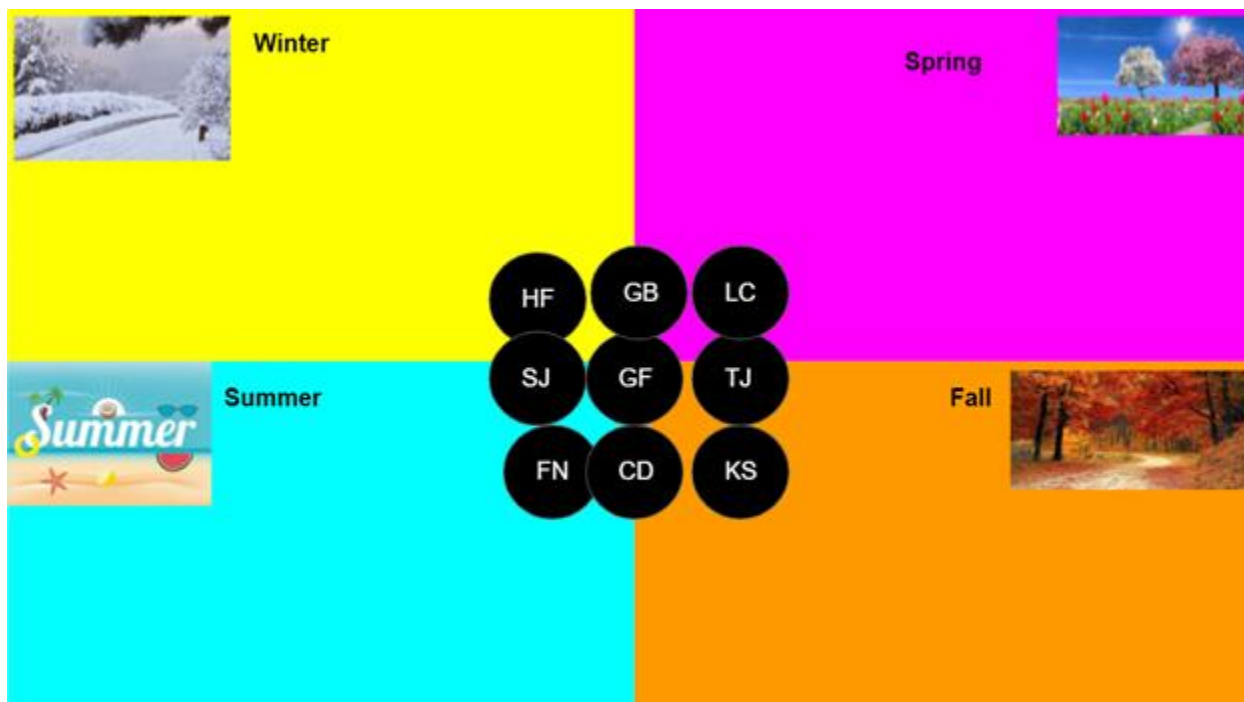
determines their social interaction and academic success in the classroom. Therefore, purposefully integrating academic language in in content lesson and classroom procedures benefits all learner. Figure 4.3 shows the seven strategies of Academic Language that teachers may find useful to help students build academic language. Furthermore, an overview of each strategy is provided along with visuals. A virtual option for vocabulary journals is also provided (Figure 4.4). This is a jamboard (i.e., tell quickly what a jamboard is) where students can edit and keep adding pages as needed. Janzen (2008) expressed explicit language instruction is not an additional standard in the classroom--it should be integrated in content instruction. These strategies are suggestions teachers may integrate in their lessons to teach vocabulary.

Figure 4.3: *Academic Language Strategies*



Figure 4.4: *Virtual Vocabulary Journal*



Classroom Interaction happens when students are given the opportunity to interrelate and connect with each other and the teacher. It helps students to build confidence and use academic language. Wiley (2018) stated that the development of strong conversation skills has many benefits for ELLs. Providing opportunities for students to have conversations develop students' background knowledge, vocabulary and thinking skills, which students to improve their reading and writing skills. The handbook provides five strategies teachers may use to encourage interaction among peers within the classroom (i.e., Fishbowl, back-to-back; Face to face, Think Pair Share, Four corners, Pass the Mic). All strategies provide an explanation as to how they can be executed in the classroom. The Fishbowl strategies also has a video with future explanation on its down. Figure 4.5 shows how students may engage in the four corners activity on their computers.

Figure 4.5: *Virtual edition of Four Corners*

Comprehension is an extremely important component in the teaching and learning process. DelliCarpini (2011), explained that working with English language learners in mainstream classrooms can provide great benefits as a deeper understanding of different cultural practices is developed. Implementing effective strategies to support ELLs throughout the reading process provides great benefits and enhances outcomes for those students in terms of comprehension, confidence and growth. Teachers should employ different strategies to make students aware of the processes that they are engaging in and make meaning from the text and to communicate effectively (DelliCarpini, 2011). The handbook provides five strategies to support comprehension and a video explaining additional strategies that are useful to support comprehension. Questioning technique and role play are the two first strategies listed for comprehension (Figure 4.6). Both provide an overview of the strategies. The questioning technique, however, has a video, “Before, During and After Questions: Promoting Reading

Comprehension and Critical Thinking” demonstrating how it may be implemented in the classroom.

Figure 4.6: *The questioning technique and role play*

Questioning Technique	Role Play
<p>Questions can be used to check for understanding and also to spark students' interest as they read a text. Teachers should be very skilled in the way they ask questions, so they can stimulate students' interest and keep them curious. Students should also be ask questions and make predictions about the text. When answering questions they may also search for the evidence from the book, some question may require higher order thinking where they have to infer and or make connections. The video below shows a teacher implementing the strategy throughout the lesson.</p> 	<p>Role play helps students to fully visualize and make sense of what was read. During a role play the students will be acting out their understanding of a stories or the information received which may include the use of some of their senses. Role play helps to connect the whole being in the learning process. It looks like, sounds like, feels like etc. Visualizing helps to aid comprehension.</p> 

Other strategies such as reciprocal teaching, thumbs up/down or fist to five, and K.W.L were listed providing an outline of the benefits and or steps to implement. The thumbs up/down provide a virtual option (Figure 4.7). A video providing tips on additional reading comprehension strategies is included.

Figure 4.7: *Online thumbs up/down*



In summary, this handbook should serve as a meaningful and easily accessible resource for teachers when planning for ELLs. A list of strategies to support ELLs in Academic Language, Classroom Interaction and Comprehension was provided. Teachers and other professionals working with ELLs will be able to find practical strategies to support students' learning. English Learners require additional language support to be proficient and meet the requirements of common core standards. Many teachers however feel ill-equipped and inexperienced to meet these needs (Wilsey, 2018). These strategies should be helpful as teachers plan lessons to meet the needs of the students.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The number of language learners in American mainstream classrooms continues to rise; elementary teachers across the country have observed the number of ELLs is increasing every year (Clarkson, 2008; DelliCarpini, 2008). Classrooms have become a global village, with a wide range of diverse learners ready to learn and grow. In conjunction with this, the dynamics of the society are changing, and teachers need to be prepared to respond effectively to the needs of all learners. Educators must acknowledge the importance of being aware of and prepared to meet the needs of these students. For teachers to help these students to be successful, they must have the necessary resources to plan and execute meaningful lessons. For this reason, I created an online handbook that will be very beneficial to teachers and other professionals working with ELLs.

As professionals in a helping career, it is imperative for teachers to help make the transition into a new culture much easier for the students placed in our care. This handbook is one such resource that will be very useful in supporting students' academic language development, social interactions and comprehension. The handbook provides great strategies teachers can integrate into their regular lessons, making them more engaging and meaningful for students. The handbook is online, which makes it easily accessible to all stakeholders. I anticipate this project will make an impact and will be useful to many. My hope is that it will be helpful to teachers when planning and beneficial to the students, the participants and recipients of these strategies.

The increasing number of ELLs is a growing trend which means this information and handbook will still be beneficial in the future. However, future work is necessary; the work does not end here. Change is inevitable so making updates as necessary would be of great benefit. The

newest edition is always welcomed. For future research, it would also be beneficial to add progress monitoring tools and methods teachers may use to ensure ELLs are receptive to the strategies implemented and to track students' progress. As an educator I will continue to advocate for teachers to intentionally plan lessons, including strategies that engage ELLs instead of just labeling them as low performing. I will encourage my fellow educators to use the online handbook as a resource and to make it a habit to include various strategies in their daily routine. This will help students to feel a sense of belonging and lead them to get more involved in class activities. My other colleagues who serve students during intervention, will also enjoy a few great new ideas to use in their small groups. The objective is to do what is best for all learners. I will also encourage colleges to participate in academic language cohorts and similar professional training. Furthermore, administration should also ensure teachers are creating inclusive environments for all learners.

During this process, I had the opportunity to learn from other scholars about the factors affecting language learners and the ways teachers can scaffold students' learning to help them learn and grow. As a result, I have become more aware and intentional with the language learners in my class. The process has taught me to be more patient and intentional when planning lessons to ensure all students are being reached. I have become more aware of being culturally responsive and the importance of self-evaluation to ensure personal biases are not in the way of our students' learning. I have also had the exposure to learn great new ideas and strategies that I will implement in my classroom and will continue to share with colleagues.

Finally, ELL students are required to perform in the same context of standards and accountability as their native English-speaking peers. All children, including ELLs, must reach high standards by demonstrating proficiency in language arts and math. With this said, the

expectation of teacher accountability and responsibility is very high. It is exactly this context that makes it imperative for mainstream teachers to be more efficient in reaching students.

Teachers must employ a variety of strategies to help ELL students maintain the same academic levels as their peers. It will bring me joy to know this research and the online handbook I have created will be a useful resource that can help teachers to guide their ELL students, and ultimately that the handbook will help ELLs to succeed.

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